

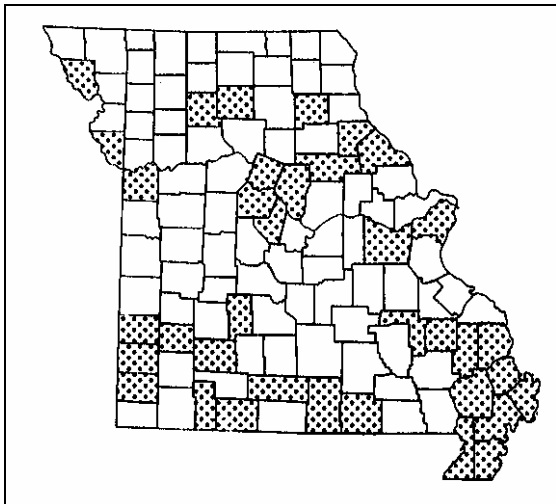
Catalpa

Catalpa speciosa Warder

This tree is also called northern catalpa, hardy catalpa, cigartree, or western catalpa, and is a separate species from southern catalpa (*C. bignonioides* Walt.). While only northern catalpa is native to Missouri, both species occur in scattered locations in the state. It has been used as both a windbreak planting and an ornamental in yards. The large white showy flowers are most attractive and fragrant, and the tree reaches a large size quickly. Originally, northern catalpa was native to bottomlands and rich soils of southeast Missouri.

The sapwood is creamy white to pale gray, usually narrow, while the heartwood is a warm gray-brown or reddish brown, occasionally with a lavender tinge. The bark is light grayish or reddish brown with shallow furrows and flat, scaly ridges. It has no characteristic taste, but may have a faint aromatic odor. The wood is usually straight-grained, moderately lightweight, soft and weak in bending, but is very durable. It is ring porous and the pores are partially blocked by tylosis. The dry lumber is stable and machines well. It takes a finish well if the large pores are filled.

Because the tree is not abundant statewide, it is not a common wood at sawmills. However, because of its natural durability, it makes excellent fence posts. It is also said to be an excellent wood for musical instruments. The grain and texture are attractive and it is a desirable wood for home workshops when available.



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